

March 20, 2012

TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 21

Director, Colin
Trevorrow 9:40 AM

March 22

Second Evening
of Readings K-Z
6-8 PM

March 23

Third Quarter Ends
World Language
Celebration 1:20-3:15 PM

March 29

Film Screening:
Miss Representation
with Panel 6-8 PM

World Language Celebration—Friday 3/23 1:20-3:15 PM



Please join us this Friday, March 23 from 1:20-3:15 p.m. for a World Language Celebration, highlighting students' work in Chinese and Spanish. There will be songs, games, story telling, a dragon dance, calligraphy booths, and more. All ages are invited. It will be a fun and unique event.

Announcing the VCS Shuttle Bus Service!



Great news! In our continuing attempt to reach out to families in our area we are happy to announce the first morning and afternoon Shuttle Bus Service for VCS starting next fall. The route will run north to the Milton Rt.89 interchange and then up the islands to South Hero and Grand Isle. Picking up and dropping off students at set locations, the bus will run every school day of the academic year. The fee will be very reasonable (\$1300 for service both ways) and include options for half-service (\$650) too. After running this program starting in September, we will be looking at other routes as well. Please call Peter Gilmore with questions.

College Corner –by Sarah Soule



VCS was fortunate to welcome Tracey Maurer of the University of Vermont to our school on Monday, March 19th. Tracey met with our sophomores and juniors in the Commons Room. The University of Vermont is offering exciting programs for high school students this summer. During the month of July students can have an academic experience by taking a college course, earn three credits towards a college degree, and experience college life by [living in a dorm](#) and [eating in a dining hall](#). UVM's [July Program](#) for high school students offers:

- [Entry-level college courses](#) including Math, English, History and Psychology;
- [Special events](#), such as Career Panels in Engineering, Business, Engineering and Health Sciences;
- An [SAT prep course](#); and
- Workshops on *Writing a College Essay*, *Navigating the Common Application*, and *How to Search for a College*.

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High school students registering for the July Program receive a 50% reduction in in-state academic year tuition. **In-state students may elect to use their state-funded [Dual Enrollment voucher](#) to take a summer course tuition FREE**.** Students can live on campus but they can also commute. Students will receive an official UVM transcript, which can transfer with them to their future undergraduate degree.

The UVM Summer Program is an academic experience that begins on July 1 and concludes on July 28. High school students who have completed their sophomore year and are academically endorsed by their school's college counselor are eligible. [Watch our video](#) to learn more and [complete your application](#).

For further information, please contact Sarah Soule.

Big Trips 2013 –by Chance Cardamone-Knewstub

We're pleased to announce the three big trips we plan to offer for next year. I find this round of trips especially exciting in that two of them are brand new for us - China and Paris. Yes, we have gone to China once before, but this trip will have a significantly different itinerary than the previous China trip. Additionally, Heather Moore and Ben Wang will debut as overseas trip leaders, which is great news for us given the energy and expertise they lend their respective trips. I also like the balance of focus these trips provide, including the arts, history, ecology, language, outdoor adventure, and cross-cultural experiences. Finally, it's always good news when we can provide an opportunity for just about everyone to participate. Because the Yellowstone trip is open to 8th graders, all returning students have a shot at participating in one of these adventures - if they apply!

I can't tell you how many times I've heard students wishing that they were going to Sundance, or Belize, or Peru, etc., and ruing the fact that they had simply not applied. If you have any interest whatsoever, you should be applying. You can always decide not to participate later, but you can't apply later.

Answers to few common questions: Yes, you can apply to more than one trip. Simply indicate your order of preference. If you are not accepted to your first choice, you will automatically be considered for your second. Yes, it is possible (although quite rare) to participate in more than one trip but only if by doing so you are not precluding someone else from participating in any trip. If you do end up on one of these trips, please remember that the main reason we announce these so far ahead of time is so that you, the student, can make some decisions about your priorities. This summer is your best opportunity to earn some or all of the cost of the trip. So, look at these trips, talk to your parents, and apply. The application that is linked to email and will be available in hard copy at the front desk.

Yellowstone National Park—January 2013 *Leader: Jessica Redmond and Jasmine Walker*

Imagine standing on your back porch, breathing in crisp, cold air. Two bald eagles perched in a tree are faintly illuminated by the crescent moon rising in the valley before you. You can smell the faintest tinge of sulphur that emanates from the natural hot spots and geysers several miles away. Just fifty yards from the porch wild bison and mountain goats dig into the eight inch layer of snow for winter grass. A howl sails over the breeze from the west. A coyote, perhaps? Then one by one, a chorus of howls echo into the valley—a pack of wolves. Then, from the east, a response from a rival pack. A howl-off has begun that will last for hours. The next day, the pack from the east eats its elk on the mountain, which you can view from the back porch. If observing nature in America's version of the Serengeti appeals to you, then the Yellowstone Encounter Week is the trip for you. Current 7th - 11th graders can apply. Cost: approximately \$2500.



Pictures can be found here... <http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org/institute/sightings.aspx>

China Trip Summer 2013, July 13 – Aug 3 *Leaders: Ben Wang and Jennifer Cohen*



The mission of this trip to China is to introduce students to the Chinese and Tibetan cultures, to help them learn to negotiate meaning across these cultures, and to create connections among the students and faculty members as they form lasting memories. There will be a strong emphasis on ecological citizenship, on direct outdoor experience, and on the implications of the growth of China as a world power.

Eligibility: Students who will be in grades 9-12 during the 2012-2013 school year. Preference will be given to students enrolled in Chinese class.

This trip will include overnights in small hotels, in hostels, on trains, and in the homes of Chinese/Tibetan families. We will spend time in the enormous cities of Beijing and Hong Kong, as well as in mountain villages in Tibetan areas. We will explore markets, the panda research base, universities, and monasteries, and will spend several days on a horse-packing trek in the mountains on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau.
Cost: airfare, trains, hotels/hostels/homestays, guides/outfitters, food, entertainment, VISAS

Total = approximately \$4000-\$5000, depending on plane fare fluctuations and further discussions with contacts in China.

Paris Trip—May 2013 *Leaders: Ben Patrick and Heather Moore*



Heather Moore and Ben Patrick are excited to announce that we will be leading a trip to Paris, France during the Spring Encounter Week in May, 2013! We will explore the streets of Paris via foot and metro, visiting the museums, cathedrals, catacombs, cafes, and immerse ourselves in the City of Light. Part of this Encounter Week will include a day excursion to the countryside to explore a medieval castle, an afternoon of biking in the gardens of Versailles, and a boat tour along the seine! Our lodging will be conveniently located three blocks from Notre Dame, close to the Louvre and near many great restaurants and cafes.

The focus of the trip is to study the art and history of Paris. We're also hoping to add a local food component. The estimated cost of the trip is \$3,000. This estimate is derived from the current figures for air, food, museums, and lodging and is meant to be estimate. In the changing global economy, it's hard to predict what the Euro/Dollar exchange rate will be next year.

Research & Service Update: Environmental Engineering

—by Peter Goff

This semester, a hearty band of seventh, ninth, and eleventh - graders are working in our local watershed to better understand some recent changes and how we might be able to address some of those changes. We started the semester with a workshop led Jim Pease of the VT Department of Environmental Conservation. Jim has worked with VCS for at least a decade on various projects (you can see him in one of the four posters when you walk into VCS). He has tasked us with recording the erosion in the lake-ward streams in our watershed. As you can see in the photos on page four, the lack of snow this winter really helped us effectively document aggradation, degradation, and other stream-wide changes. You can also clearly see the excitement, enthusiasm, and just plain happiness in Dyson's face! (*To be fair to Pollyanna Lord, that was a staged shot!*) ...Continued on pg. 4...

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On non-field days, our Junior-led groups of three present on endangered or invasive species in our watershed, or lead class discussions on Environmental Management issues. Examples include presentations on Vermont wild cats, polluted rivers catching fire, and the fate of our bat populations. When we are done with our erosion study in a couple of weeks, we will present our work to the town of South Burlington and some concerned neighbors then move on to the 'design' phase of this R&S. We have been asked by the Board of Trustees' Commons Campus Committee to come up with some designs for a four season experimental greenhouse that would allow us to better understand and/or remediate the ecosystem-wide effects of our changing riparian (stream) systems.



This Week in Photos



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